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ABSTRACT

The author examines the data from the Richmond Youth Project. Questionnaires were administered to and completed by 4,077 students in the eleven public junior and senior high schools. The students were categorized by degrees as rebel or nonrebel according to three criteria: (1) whether they had stayed away from school just because they wanted to, (2) whether they had been sent out of the classroom, and (3) whether they had been suspended from school. The analysis focuses on rebels' personal characteristics, their perception of future status, and the relevance of their school experience to their futures. Samplings of the total data are presented and indicate that the rebel: (1) is extremely anxious about his future, (2) feels that teachers want students to be quiet, (3) is a terminal student in a system which is primarily preparatory for college, and (4) is not facilitated by the curriculum in a satisfactory identity development. The concluding discussion emphasizes the need for individualizing curricula and for initiating thoroughly integrated work and study programs. (TL)

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Portrait of the High School Rebel

Adolescent rebellion is a distressing reality in the contemporary public schools. The fact that many high school students rebel in the immediate presence of authority constitutes a serious dilemma for administrators, counselors, and teachers. The maintenance of orderly social intercourse in the classroom is consistently problematic. The impact of deviance upon the quality of the formal educational process is a deteriorative one.

Some research indicates that deviance results when there is poor articulation between present school activity and future status. If the school and curriculum do not link adolescence and adulthood in terms of the most intensely felt needs (for example, future job and marriage), rebelliousness and alienation result.[1] The crucial concern is the degree to which the student can achieve status increment through improved current performance. Rebellion and what Stinchcombe terms "expressive alienation," or the overt acting out of alienation in the immediate presence of authority, occur when future status is not clearly related to present performance.[2] When this is the case, the educational institution and curriculum are to some degree dysfunctional.

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Adolescents confront the necessity of establishing their own identity. They must develop a definition of their place in society and relate the society's values to their personal development in a coherent and meaningful manner.[3] According to Stinchcombe, ". . .a high school student wants to grow up into an adult who is successful by adult standards. Culture that is not relevant to the problem of growing up successful, however useful it may be for citizens or householders, will not make school meaningful."[4] Adolescents who believe that deferment of gratifications in school is not instrumental to achieving success become hedonistic and non-utilitarian. They demand autonomy from adults because compliance does not promise a satisfactory future.[5]

The extent to which school is helpful to adolescents in the process of growing up is a determinant of school rebellion. The relevance of present education to the future is critical. If the adolescent cannot develop a satisfactory identity through the educational process, he will not be inclined to conform to the school's behavioral expectations.

The Sample[6] and Indicators

The data are a product of the Richmond Youth Project.[7] The Richmond Youth Project staff administered survey questionnaires to students in the eleven public junior and senior high schools of Western Contra Costa County during the spring of 1965. Western Contra Costa County is located

area of the San Francisco Bay region. It is contiguous with Berkeley in the south, San Francisco Bay in the west, San Pablo Bay in the north, and a chain of hills in the east. The professionals and executives of the East Bay reside in the hills; the manual worker and Negro populations dwell in the flatland region between the hills and the bay. The major city in the western county is Richmond.[8]

The sample for the study was drawn from Western Contra Costa County's public junior and senior high school student population of 17,5000 in the fall of 1964. This population was stratified by school, grade, race, and sex. Disproportionate random samples were drawn from each of 130 populated substrata. If a sub-stratum were sufficiently large to generate a sample of at least 25 students, then 30 percent of non-Negro boys, 12 percent of non-Negro girls, 85 percent of Negro boys and 60 percent of Negro girls were selected. If 25 students could not be secured from a stratum with these sampling fractions, the fraction was increased to 1.0, thereby including all students in the category. Except for those cases where the entire population of a stratum was drawn, simple random samples were drawn within each stratum. This methodology generated a stratified probability sample of 5,545 students. A complete set of data was secured for 73.5 percent of the original sample.

The 4,077 completed questionnaires distribute into race-sex categories as follows:

Table 1

COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES BY RACE AND SEX

	Boys		Girls	
	Negro	Non-Negro	Negro	Non-Negro
Sample Size	1001	1588	813	675

The sampling error can be calculated by a comparison of the distribution of a variable in the population with the same measure in the sample; in this case, an indicator of achievement; namely, Differential Aptitude Test scores. The mean of the raw scores for the total population of 11,881 students having officially recorded scores on the Verbal Reasoning section of the DAT is 15.91 with a standard deviation of 9.35. The estimate of the population mean based upon a drawn sample of 5,545 is 15.73. This figure is less than 0.02 of a standard deviation below the population mean of 15.91. Hence, sampling error is negligible. Estimates of other population parameters corroborate this inference.

Non-response bias is slightly greater than sampling error. The estimate of the population mean for the DAT Verbal Reasoning Test, derived from the final sample of 4,077 cases, is 16.63. This figure is .077 standard deviation from the population mean

of 15.91. The estimate based on the originally drawn sample is only 0.02 standard deviation from the population mean. Non-response is, therefore, somewhat greater than random sampling error, but not really significant. An analysis of mean weighted average grades in English according to response categories confirms the finding.

A number of questionnaire items are employed as measures of concepts. The most important concepts are rebellion, identity anxiety, curriculum alienation, student-teacher alienation, and school orientation. Many variables are analyzed without reference to concepts.

A measure for school rebellion was sought that would indicate genuine disaffection with the school. The acting out of alienation had to be habitual in order to be regarded as rebellion. If not, it had to involve a rather extreme form of behavior.

Applying these guidelines, a student was categorized as a rebel or non-rebel according to his configuration of responses on the following questions:

1. During the last year, did you ever stay away from school just because you had other things you wanted to do?
(rebellion = often, a few times)

2. During the last year, were you ever sent out of a classroom by a teacher?
(rebellion = often, a few times)

3. Have you ever been suspended from school?

(rebellion = often, a few times, once or twice)

Four levels of rebellion are generated by this procedure. Individual students may be categorized as a rebel 0, 1, 2 or 3 times; they will be referred to as having 0, 1, 2 or 3 offenses.

The measure for curriculum alienation is developed from two items: "Many of the things we have to memorize are meaningless" and "Schools don't give the necessary training." The question "Are you worried about what you will do after high school?" provides a measure of identity anxiety. The item "Teachers just want you to be quiet" is operationally regarded as an index of student-teacher alienation. An indication of a student's orientation to the school is given in response to the question, "Which of these three things do you think is the <u>most</u> important thing you can get out of school." "Job training" is coded as a vocational orientation: "skill in subjects like English and Mathematics" and "ability to think clearly" are coded as non-vocational orientations.

The analysis focuses on the following broad, interrelated questions: What are the characteristics of the rebel? Does adolescent rebellion occur when future status is not clearly related to present school performance? To what extent is attending school meaningful to the adolescent? Does the

adolescent rebel when he perceives little or nothing in his school experience that is relevant to the future?

The Rebel Identity*

The rebel's attitudes toward school and his claims for autonomy and adult privileges are the most salient features of his identity. The rebel demands access to a car, smoking and drinking privileges, and characteristically adult sex relationships, including marriage. He does not believe that what he learns in school helps him to understand the real world he encounters daily; he does not feel that doing well in school will get him a job; and, he is worried about learning a trade and finding a job. He does not expect to attend college. He has not decided upon a particular career goal, although he is concerned about his future. He dislikes school, claiming that he often cannot understand what his teachers are talking about, that they do not talk about the kind of problems people really have, nor do they give enough examples in class to clarify their presentations. His entire perception of the school and curriculum is negative, particularly with respect to teachers and the meaning of the school experience.

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*The rebel profile is valid in each of the race-sex categories of Table 1. The differences between rebel and non-rebel reported here are statistically significant by the non-parametric test chi-square, ranging from the .001 to the .05 level.

The rebel's social world is marked by a life style committed to achieving independence from adults. Personal expectations are realized on a short-term basis by developing an informal, alternate opportunity structure[9] in lieu of the formal, compulsory high school curriculum. Rebel adolescents circumvent the school's institutionalized channels in order to secure some sort of immediate gratification of their expectations. The educational process does not really involve them.

The rebel's social status, occupational expectation, attitude toward work, feeling of inadequacy, and parents' attitudes reinforce the stigmatization he experiences at school. The rebel comes from a blue collar socio-economic background. He believes that the only reason to have a job is for money. He expects to be a blue collar worker, but often would really like to achieve a higher status. He feels he is sometimes no good at all, that "things are all mixed up" in his life, and that people are always picking on him. He thinks that securing a good education is more difficult than getting a good job. His parents do not want him to go to college or do not really care. His father is dissatisfied with his job. These social characteristics establish a negative identity that makes success, as defined by the school, highly unlikely.

The process of education is the process of changing identity. If the adolescent refuses either the identity or the education

offered by the school, he is inclined to substitute another identity -- that of the rebel. According to Goodenough, "Education . . . may be seen as a process in which people are helped to exchange features of their present identities for new ones."[10] If so, the school has failed the rebel. He has not been aided materially in developing a new identity. He is worried about his future career; he is troubled about his identity.

Table 2 (Non-Negro Boys)

REBELLION OFFENSES BY IDENTITY ANXIETY

"Are you worried about knowing what you will do after high school?"

	Very	Somewhat	Not at all	Other*	Total**
Rebellion					
3 offenses	23.1%	36.5	30.8	9.6	52
2 offenses	16.3	44.6	37.0	2.2	92
1 offense	21.0	46.4	29.8	2.8	319
Non-rebel	13.7	50.8	33.5	2.0	1034
Total	236	733	491	37	1497

The rebel believes that "what will happen will happen no matter what." He is enveloped by a mood of desperation that he

*Non-response or error

**Refers to number of cases

really serving him contributes to his expressive alienation and rebellion. He believes that "teachers just want you to be quiet." Teachers are merely agents of control for the rebel. They are not viewed positively as professionals endeavoring to educate him. [11]

Table 3 (Non-Negro Boys)

REBELLION OFFENSES BY STUDENT-TEACHER ALIENATION

"Teachers just want you to be quiet."

Rebellion	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Other	Total
3 offenses	38.5%	25.0	36.5	0.0	52
2 offenses	40.2	13.0	46.7	0.0	92
1 offense	32.3	14.1	52.0	1.6	319
Non-rebel	21.5	14.5	63.3	0.7	1034
Total	382	220	883	12	1497

The rebel has a definite vocational orientation to the school. He believes that "job training" is the most important advantage he can secure from the school. The non-rebel is non-vocational in his outlook, acknowledging the most merit in "subjects like English and mathematics" and the "ability to think clearly." The rebel's intelligence is concrete and mechanical; the non-rebel's is abstract and conceptual. The school curriculum, structured

to reward the conceptually intelligent student, favors the non-rebel. There are unfortunately no really legitimate channels to adult success for the rebel. This situation is the source of much alienation and rebellion.

Table 4 (Non-Negro Boys)

REBELLION OFFENSES BY SCHOOL ORIENTATION

Rebellion	Vocational	Non-Vocational	Other	Total
3 offenses	40.4%	55.8	3.8	52
2 offenses	35.9	63.0	1.1	92
1 offense	35.1	63.9	0.9	319
Non-rebel	31.1	68.0	0.9	1034
Total	488	994	15	1497

The rebel is the terminal student. The non-rebel expects higher education almost twice as often as the rebel. College preparatory students previously constituted only a small minority in a mass terminal educational system. As the preparatory curriculum and students became the focus of the high school, a major dysfunction developed, exacerbated by the continued extension of higher educational opportunities. The mass, terminal institution, functioning as a mass preparatory system, effectively alienated its terminal students. This development means now that the deviant behavior directed toward the school and school-affiliated

personnel by terminal students becomes increasingly problematic.[12] The values of the rebel, "the search for kicks, the disdain of work . . . and the acceptance of aggressive toughness as proof of masculinity,"[13] with all their incompatibility with any type of academic study, become increasingly those of the terminal student.

The rebel is alienated from the school's curriculum to a much greater extent than the non-rebel. He believes that "schools do not give the necessary training" and that much of what he must study is "meaningless." Rebellion is a direct protest against frustrating and defeating experiences in the school. If a society does not make adequate preparation for the induction of adolescents into adulthood, substitute behavior develops spontaneously among adolescents. When the school and curriculum do not satisfy adolescent needs and expectations, youth reverse the larger society's norms, adopting non-utilitarian, deviant behavior.[14] They reject the educational system that produces their status-frustration problems.

Table 5 (Non-Negro Boys)

REBELLION OFFENSES BY CURRICULUM ALIENATION

Rebellion	High	Moderate	Low	Other	Total
3 offenses	26.9%	28.8	30.8	13.5	52
2 offenses	25.0	31.5	39.1	4.3	92
1 offense	22.5	31.7	41.1	4.7	319
Non-rebel	14.7	32.7	49.1	3.4	1034
Total	262	483	691	61	1497

The curriculum does not facilitate the rebel's development toward some satisfactory identity. The rebel's high level of alienation points to the poor articulation between his institutionalized school career and the future he expects. The low alienation level of the non-rebel suggests that the school experience is a valuable one for him. He is less existentially frustrated at school; the rebel -- alienated, negativistic, and fatalistic -- is unable to find much that is relevant to his future in the school experience. The realities of curriculum alienation, status frustration, identity anxiety, and expressive alienation underscore the meaningless of the present educational system for many adolescents. Philosophically, the entire rebellion milieu has been referred to as one of existential frustration. It is perhaps too incisive a term, but it does emphasize what the schools are effectively doing to some youth; that is, spoiling their identities.

Discussion

The basic problem of the rebel is that he does not have access to a satisfactory channel of growth to adult status. Since he is doing poorly in school, he cannot attain competence through formal education, at least as presently structured. Yet he does want to grow up, to possess the symbols of manhood, and assert his independence. Confronted with a school system that does not educate him, the rebel acts out an ersatz adulthood.

The answer to the dysfunctional aspects of the school's curriculum vis-a'-vis the learner-delinquent is increased curricular differentiation. This means that the schools must develop a practicable curriculum that educates the rebel's vocational-mechanical intelligence.[15] Such a curriculum would insure a modicum of success and reward for the rebel. The single-track, pre-college curriculum that relegates the rebel to second-class citizenship is incompatible with the democratic ideal-type of the comprehensive high school, wherein each student has, theoretically, the opportunity to learn. The American democratic experiment in equal educational opportunity does not work because it provides no meaningful differentiation of educational opportunity. Individualization of instruction must be offered that prepares the rebel realistically for a career. His is a different type of intelligence; adequate education must be provided.

The school functions not as a link between adolescence and adulthood, but engenders the habit of failure, eliciting rebellion, alienation, fatalism, and short-term gratification. The curriculum is structured so as to place the vocationally oriented adolescent in a disadvantageous circumstance; stigma attaches to his inability or unwillingness to complete a pre-college program. Recognition of the rebel's mechanical intelligence must be institutionalized in the schools. Realistic vocational training, relating to specific and feasible labor

market demand, must be increasingly provided.

The curricula of contemporary public schools generally recognize only one standard of success; namely, academic achievement. The principle of pluralism must not only be fostered in the broader cultural milieu, but also promoted in the schools. The criteria of achievement must be diverse, recognizing different types of abilities and backgrounds. Curricula providing opportunities for everyone to learn must be developed, particularly the rebel, who is not now being adequately educated.

The technological revolution has made vocational education confined to the school an anachronism. Work and study must be thoroughly integrated. The rebel must be able to participate in the world of work while he is a student. He will be able, in this fashion, to relate what he is doing in the classroom or shop to genuine occupational opportunities. The prime objective for the rebel should be some sort of work-study program.

The governing principle of the work-study program should be that guidance be offered continually until the student is successfully adjusted.[16] Realization of this principle will often require follow-up inquiry and guidance beyond the period of formal education and training. The extension of the adolescent work-study program becomes, in effect, an adult education program. The rebel can quite often profit as much from guidance after he leaves school as during the school

experience. If the guidance is not offered, the positive effects of any previous training and evaluation may be dissipated.

The school cannot alone provide the means for the adjustment of the rebel. The coordination of efforts by government agencies, voluntary organizations, youth groups, and industry are necessary. The responsibility for the coordination of activities directed to the assistance of the rebel resides in the final analysis with the community. Civic leaders, acting in concert with all elements of the community, must mobilize adequate resources for the rebel's life-vocational adjustment. Their participation is particularly important in view of the realities of community power structure. If they are not involved throughout, the likelihood of a work-study program failing is greatly increased.

Footnotes

[1]Cf. Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Rebellion in a High School (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964) and G. Louis Heath, "The Rebels of East Bay: A Study of Adolescent School Rebellion in the San Francisco Bay Area" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of California, Berkeley, 1969).

[2]Stinchcombe, op. cit., pp. 1-14.

[3]S. N. Eisenstadt, "Archetypal Patterns of Youth," in Erik H. Erikson (ed.), Youth: Change and Challenge (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p.37.

[4]Stinchcombe, op. cit., p. 179.

[5]Stinchcombe, op. cit., p. 3.

[6]The description of the sample is based upon Alan B. Wilson, Travis Hirschi, and Glen Elder's "Technical Report No. 1: Secondary School Survey" (Berkeley: Survey Research Center, 1965), pp. 3-21.

[7]The Richmond Youth Project research was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (MH-0097). The writer is indebted to Dr. Alan B. Wilson, director of the project, for permission to analyze and report certain segments of the data. The writer's research has been supported by a United States Office of Education grant (OEG-9-8-001635-0082) and a generous allocation of University of California subsidized computer time.

[8]Alan B. Wilson, "Western Contra Costa County Population, 1965: Demographic Characteristics" (Berkeley: Survey Research Center, University of California, 1966).

[9]Cf. Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), Chapters II and III.

[10]Ward H. Goodenough in Frederick C. Gruber (ed.), Anthropology and Education (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 86.

[11]Cf. Chandler Washburne, "The Teacher in the Authority System," Journal of Educational Sociology, XXX, No. 9 (1957), pp. 390-395.

[12]Martin Trow, "The Second Transformation of American Secondary Education," International Journal of Comparative Sociology, II, 1960-61, Leiden: E.J. Brill (September, 1961) pp. 162-166

[13]David Matza and G. M. Sykes, "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values," American Sociological Review, Vol. 26 (October, 1961), p. 715.

[14]Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

[15]Cf. Clara C. Cooper, A Comparative Study of Delinquents and Non-Delinquents (Portsmouth, Ohio: The Psychological Service Center Press, 1960), pp. 207-209.

[16]Theodore L. Reller, Community Planning For Youth (Philadelphia: The Public Education and Child Labor Association of Pennsylvania, 1938), passim.